

## Nissan Terrano II

Featuring 2.4i SLX



**T**HANKS TO SOME CLEVER MARKETING and factors such as spiralling insurance premiums, it seems that, these days, hot-hatches are out and four-wheel drives are in.

Nissan already offered the rugged and recently improved Patrol in the off-roaders sector of the market, but as it's clear that many buyers want a tall, reassuring driving position and car-like sophistication just as much as – if not more than – all-terrain ability, Nissan's response was this more civilised off-roader, the Terrano.

The mighty Ford empire could have adapted or imported one of its own vehicles from the American market to get in on the act, but it was obviously impressed with the Terrano. So, it has joined forces with Nissan and sells a virtually identical Ford-badged version (built alongside the Terrano in Spain) known as the Maverick. Although we've sampled the Nissan version, our views apply equally well to the Maverick, even though it's rather better equipped and can cost a little more.

The Terrano comes in short-wheelbase three-door or long-wheelbase five-door form, with the

five-door's greater length providing seating for up to seven – all facing forwards.

Two four-cylinder engines are on offer: a 2.4-litre petrol giving 122bhp and a 2.7-litre turbodiesel producing about 100bhp. At the moment there's no automatic transmission, so power is delivered through a five-speed manual gearbox – to the rear wheels only for normal road use.

The four-wheel drive is of the simpler "part-time", driver-selected variety. This lacks a central differential, so it should only be used off-road or on snow or other slippery stuff. High and low four-wheel drive ratios cater for steep or sticky terrain, and a limited-slip rear differential is standard on all models.

It doesn't take long to appreciate what a fine job Nissan has made of the Terrano, overcoming many of the snags of combining ride comfort and refinement with the ruggedness and high ground clearance needed for cross-country duties.

The Terrano is heavy, so its 98mph maximum speed and 30 to 70mph acceleration in 15sec are comparatively sedate. But, once it's moving, power

## Living with the Terrano . . .

steering, light easy controls and a commanding view for the driver (who sits in comfortable, well laid out surroundings), make the Terrano easy and enjoyable to handle. In fact, thanks to its relaxed gearing, subdued noise levels and smooth ride, it's one of the most refined four-by-fours we've sampled.

The tall, roomy build provides generous headroom and leg space for the front two rows of passengers, but restricted leg and kneeroom make the rearmost seats best suited to children.

Although there's acres of luggage space with the Terrano in five-seater form, there's considerably less with all three rows of seats in use. Both rows fold easily, though. The large side-hinged tailgate is easy on the arm muscles and has a convenient safety prop to combat breezes and gradients. It's a pity that it opens from the carriageway side of the vehicle, though, while the spare wheel and kicked-up rear window line tend to obscure the view when reversing.

Standard items on the dearer SLX models include central locking, electric windows and door mirrors, and an electric tilt-and-slide sunroof. But, while the Terrano is nicely appointed inside, storage spaces for oddments are thin on the ground, as are practical touches such as cup and cassette holders.

Big four-wheel drives are bound to be hefty on fuel, but we were pleasantly surprised by the the 2.4-litre's well-controlled thirst in our "real world" tests. We averaged about 24mpg, while the sensibly sized fuel tank allows getting on for 400 miles between stops on longer trips.

While the capital outlay on the Terrano may be quite substantial, insurance, running costs and even the fuel bills shouldn't be too hard to swallow. We also predict that depreciation will be lower than average.

So, the Terrano is an im-

pressive addition to the growing ranks of multi-purpose, all-season vehicles that are just as happy collecting the shopping or taking turns on the school run, as they are on longer journeys or weekend trips into the heart of the rugged countryside. Don't worry if it has to be the main or the only vehicle, it's one of the most pleasant and easy to live with four-by-fours around.

---

### At the Wheel

---

#### Driving position

It's a fair-sized hop up into the driving seat, but, once you're there, the car-like controls and driving position prove really easy to get along with. The spacious, lofty cabin and clear all-round view prove just as popular with passengers as they are effective at making life easy for the driver. The usual fore-and-aft and recline adjustment are supported by limited tilt adjustment of the steering wheel, but there are no lumbar support or seat-height adjusters, even on dearer SLX versions.

#### Controls and displays

If you forget that you're sitting higher up and have an extra gear lever to play with, the Terrano's light clutch, smooth and fluid controls, clear dials and well-planned facia could be straight out of a Sunny or a Primera. The driveline is a bit snatchy in slow-moving town traffic and the gear lever is a touch more agricultural than the Primera's. That said, the Terrano feels closer to a conventional family saloon than almost any other off-roader. The power steering is quite low geared and lacks any real feel of the road, but it's nicely weighted and reasonably responsive.

#### Vision

The high cabin and generous glass area not only give an excellent view over hedges but over traffic,

as well. Other plus points include sensibly sized, flush-folding door mirrors (electrically operated and heated on the SLX) and effective wash and wipe systems with an intermittent setting at both ends. The rear window line kick-up and spare wheel restrict the view a little for reversing, though. The pillars can be rather obstructive at junctions, too, and not even SLX models have the headlamp load-compensating adjustment that's shown in the handbook.

#### Driver satisfaction

When switching to this sort of vehicle from a lively saloon, you're bound to feel the pinch on driver appeal. But, taking life at a slower, more relaxed pace is by no means without its appeal. Also, of course, the space, versatility, loftiness and generally reassuring feel are what sell many of these vehicles in the first place.

---

### Space & Comfort

---

#### Getting in and out

Youngsters love the Terrano, but the high cabin floor takes some negotiating for less agile folk, although big, tall doors and a generous supply of grab handles make life as easy as possible. Access past the five-door's centre row of seats isn't too complicated, but cramped thresholds and restricted opening hinder initial entry through the rear doors. Twin dome lamps (plus a brace of map-reading lamps up front) light the way at night, while the SLX's central locking saves a lot of cross-cabin stretching come opening or locking-up time. The one-piece tailgate proves much more convenient than the horizontally split type fitted on some of these vehicles, but opening from the offside is not so good from a safety angle.

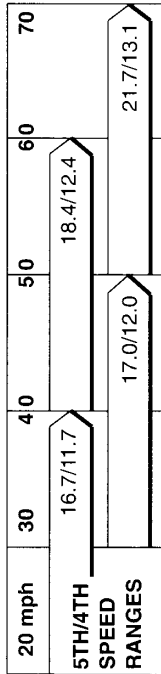
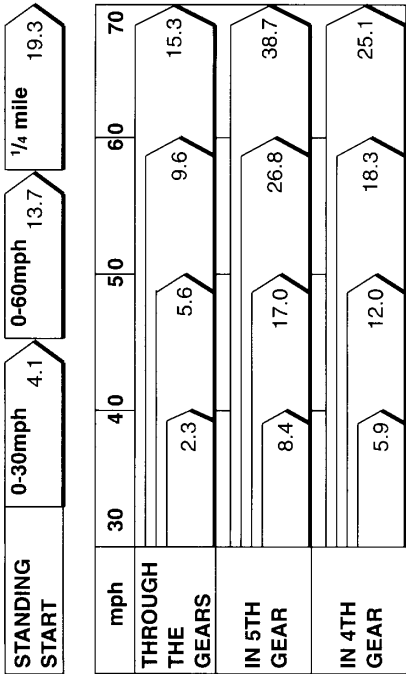
#### Seating and ride comfort

All three rows of seats score well for headroom. More upright

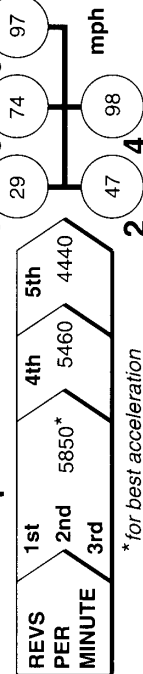
*Continued on page 4*

## PERFORMANCE

### Acceleration time in seconds



### Maximum speeds



## FUEL CONSUMPTION

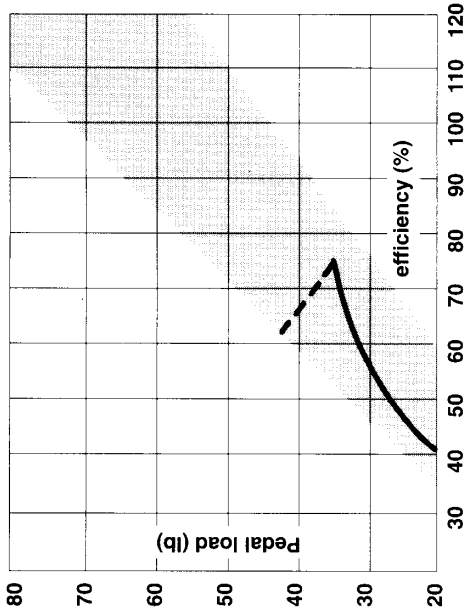
Fuel grade for tests: unleaded Premium, 95 octane

<b>Normal range</b>	mpg	18
Hard driving, heavy traffic		21 1/2
Short journeys in the suburbs		23
Motorway - 70mph cruising		24 1/2
Brisk driving, mixed roads		29 1/2
Gentle driving, rural roads		24
<b>Typical mpg overall</b>		70 litres/370 miles
Realistic tank range*		

\* based on fuel gauge/warning lamp and filling station experience

## SAFETY

### Brakes (without ABS) How pedal loads affect braking



Braking efficiency shown as a percentage of gravity (ie 100% = 1.0g). Ideally the braking curve should be a gentle sweep and lie within the shaded zone of this graph. If it's above, the brakes are too heavy; if it's below, they are too light - although this is more acceptable on cars with ABS. When the curve becomes broken, the wheels are skidding.

### Safety check list

<b>Steering</b>	true 'feel' of the road?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Brakes</b>	powerful?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	sensible effort?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	fade resistant?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Seatbelts</b>	front - effective?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	convenient?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	rears - effective?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	convenient?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Head restraints</b>	front - effective?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	second row - effective?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Interior</b>	thoroughly padded?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	shielded filler?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Fuel</b>	protected tank?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

50-0mph best stop: 71% / 118ft

Handbrake only: 28%

Fade test: How hard use affects braking (ideal brakes show no change)

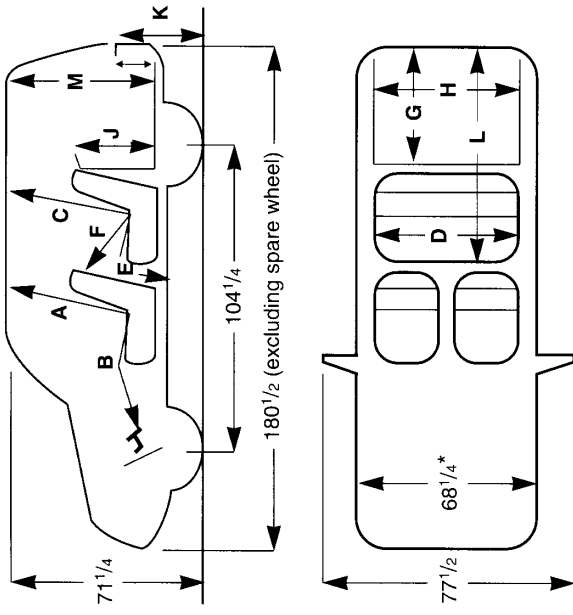
Pedal load needed for 75% stop (lb): 39

After constant use: 38

After severe use: 42

## MEASUREMENTS

### Dimensions for 5-door model (inches)



\* with mirrors folded

### Inside (inches)

<b>A</b> Front headroom (with sunroof)	38 1/2	<b>G</b> Load length (5 seats / 7 seats)	29 1/2 (10 1/2)
<b>B</b> Front legroom (min - max)	35-41	<b>H</b> Load floor width (min - max)	41-49 3/4
<b>C</b> Rear headroom (2nd row / 3rd row)	39 1/4 (37)	<b>J</b> Load height (level with setback)	21 1/2 (20 1/2)
<b>D</b> Back seat width (between armrests)	50 3/4 (51 1/2)	<b>K</b> Sill height (inner/outer)	0/31 1/2
<b>E</b> Typical rear legroom	41 (24 1/2)	<b>L</b> Load length	58 1/4
<b>F</b> Typical rear knee room	31 1/2 (26)	<b>M</b> Load height (to tailgate hinge)	35 1/4
<b>Kerb weight in lb (full of fuel)</b>	4057		

\* "Typical" represents the mean measurement behind the driver's seat set at 39in legroom and the passenger's seat set at 41in

seating permitted by a tall, boxy cabin provides generous leg-stretching space, too. However, restricted kneeroom and a lack of footwells make the back row best suited to children. Also, wherever you sit, mediocre lateral support means that you have to hang on tight during enthusiastic cornering or when tackling bumpy off-road terrain.

On well-made open roads the Terrano disguises its live rear axle and off-road potential extremely well, although shakes and shudders are more apparent at lower speed over poorer surfaces. Best of all, though, the Terrano mops up motorway miles in an impressively civilised fashion – it's certainly best of the bunch when it comes to living up to its "all-roader" claims.

#### Luggage and oddments stowage

Given the multi-purpose lifestyle the Terrano is likely to lead, the shortage of storage spaces and practical touches around the cabin is rather disappointing. Suitcases fare much better, with the five-door providing generous cargo space (even in five-seater form) or seating for seven with the third row seats brought into play. As with many multi-seaters, though, limited depth behind the rearmost seats severely restricts load space with a full complement of passengers.

#### Heating and ventilation

Four sliding levers (as opposed to rotary dials) allow a comfortable climate to be achieved in the cabin. There are rear footwell ducts on all models, and SLX versions have the added convenience of an electric tilt-and-slide glass sunroof. But,

while the face-level vents allow a cool face/warm feet compromise to be easily achieved, they're fiddly to aim. Saab could teach Nissan a thing or two here.

#### Trim and equipment

Full carpeting and fashionable fabrics make for car-like cabin appeal, but they are less suited to muddy welly invasions. On the equipment side, the SLX comes with a fair tally of goodies (not quite matching the more expensive Ford Maverick equivalent, though), while still leaving a comprehensive range of accessories with which to personalise your Terrano.

### Safety

#### Accident avoidance

Apart from some disconcertingly spongy initial pedal travel, the brakes provide well-weighted, reassuring stops in normal use, comfortably up to the demanding task of bringing a ton-and-three-quarters to rest. In panic stops, though, the front wheels tend to relinquish their bite a little too readily. An anti-lock system would, of course, alleviate this complaint, but it isn't available.

In other respects, the Terrano's lofty stance and higher roll angles discourage over-zealous bend-swinging, but shown a modicum of restraint, the Terrano's handling is vice-free and reasonably surefooted.

#### Injury prevention

Rough and tumble off-road capabilities preclude airbags, but the Terrano is well up to date in most other respects. Its catalogue

of secondary safety features includes side impact door bars, solid height-adjustable headrests for front and middle row seats, and height-adjustable mounts and seat-mounted buckles for the front seatbelts. Safety padding around the cabin looks quite reassuring.

#### Security

Anti-theft measures are fine as far as they go: the convenience of central locking plus a security coded radio/cassette player. However, the Terrano's inventory doesn't include an alarm or an immobiliser as standard. A roller-blind cover to secure the load area from prying eyes would be welcome, too.

### Money Matters

#### Fuel economy

Big, tall and weighty – it seems that everything is against the Terrano, yet it managed a creditable 24mpg overall in our exacting tests. Nearly 30mpg is available in gentle driving, while economy should drop below 20mpg only in hard driving or congested traffic. The 80-litre tank fills easily and allows nearly 400 miles between refills, with the low-level lamp allowing all but the last 10 litres or so to be used.

#### Value for money and depreciation

At about £18,000 at the time of writing, the 2.4 five-door Terrano isn't cheap, but it offers a lot of well-equipped, versatile car for the money. Give or take a few equipment details, it undercuts equivalent Ford Maverick models

### HOW IT COMPARES

Maximum seating capacity in brackets	Engine cap/power (cc/bhp)	Max speed (mph)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)	Fuel economy (mpg)	Brakes best stop (%g/lb)	Maximum legroom – front (in)	Typical leg/kneeroom – rear (in)	Steering turns/circle (ft)	Overall length (in)
Nissan Terrano 2.4i SLX (5 door) [7]	2389/122	98	15.3	38.7/25.1	24	74/35	41	41/31½	4.4/37½ (p)	180½*
Land Rover Discovery 2.5Tdi (diesel) [7]	2495/111	86	23.5	38.1/25.2	28	85/50	41¼	39/29½	3.8/39¼ (p)	178
Mitsubishi Space Wagon 2.0GLXi [7]	1997/131	113	9.3	21.6/15.6	31	102/50	40	39¼/29¼	3.2/38 (p)	177¾
Toyota Previa 2.4GX Automatic [8]	2438/133	105	12.8	NA (auto)	22½	101/35	41½	36/32½	3.5/39½ (p)	187
Vauxhall Frontera 2.4i Estate (5 door) [5]	2410/123	95	15.1	36.9/23.7	21½	84/60	42	41¾/33	3.5/41½ (p)	185½

(p) power assisted  
\*excluding spare wheel

by up to £1000, too. Diesel adds a not-unreasonable £500 to the price, although upgrading to better-equipped SLX spec nearly doubles this.

While the supply of 4x4s continues to lag behind demand, resale values remain generally buoyant, but depreciation may look less rosy in a year or two's time, when supplies are more plentiful, the novelty wears off and some of the bigger bills start coming in. The Terrano (like many off-roaders) attracts a comparatively modest, range-wide

Group 10 insurance rating – glad tidings for hot-hatch owners despairing of increasing premiums.

## Durability

### Reliability

Nominal "Made in Japan" status gives the Terrano a fine head start, although Ford and Nissan-badged Terranos and Mavericks actually come from Nissan Iberia's plant in Spain. Early impressions of the Terrano and experience of cars from Nissan UK's Sunderland

plant, however, suggest little doubt that Nissan build quality and reliability come as standard, wherever the vehicle is built.

### Warranty and servicing

The Terrano comes with Nissan's generous 3-year/60,000-mile warranty and pan-European 24-hour breakdown assistance. Routine level checks or even the odd spot of DIY maintenance reveal nothing too daunting under the bonnet. Servicing requirements and part prices look reasonably affordable.



## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

### ENGINE

**Type and size** front-mounted, longitudinal 4 in line; water-cooled. 89.0mm bore x 96.0mm stroke = 2389cc. Iron block and alloy head; 5 main bearings

**Compression ratio** 8.6:1

**Valve gear** single chain-driven overhead camshaft actuating three valves per cylinder via hydraulic tappets

**Fuel system** Nissan electronic multi-point fuel injection, three-way regulated catalyser and lambda sensor. 80-litre (17.6-gallon) tank, with low-fuel warning lamp. Fuel required: unleaded only, 95 octane minimum

**Ignition system** fully programmed electronic, integral with fuel injection, via coil and distributor

**Maximum power** 122bhp at 5200rpm

**Maximum torque** 145 lb ft at 4000rpm

### TRANSMISSION

**Clutch** 9.5in diaphragm-spring, dry plate; hydraulically operated. Pedal load/travel: 20 lb/5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>in

**Gearbox** 5-speed (all synchromesh) and reverse. Ratios: first 3.59, second 2.25, third 1.42, fourth 1.00,

top 0.82 and reverse 3.66:1.

Automatic transmission not available

**Final drive** 4.63:1, to rear wheels or "part-time" four-wheel drive with two-speed transfer box (low ratio 2.02:1). Limited-slip rear differential standard on all models

**Mph per 1000rpm** 21.9 in top, 17.9 in 4th

**Rpm at 70mph** 3205 in top gear

### CHASSIS

**Suspension** front: independent by double wishbones, torsion bars and an anti-roll bar. Rear: live axle and coil springs located by four trailing links, a Panhard rod and an anti-roll bar. Dampers: telescopic all round

**Steering** power-assisted recirculating ball with 4.4 turns between full locks. Turning circles average 37<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>ft between kerbs, with 63<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>ft circle for one turn of the wheel

**Wheels** 6J x 15 steel with 215R15 100S tyres standard. (LT235/75R15 100S B F Goodrich All-Terrain T/A on test car)

**Brakes** 10.5in ventilated discs front, 10.2in drums rear, with vacuum servo. Anti-lock control not available